

Episode #80 Reducing frustration with Preventive Teaching: Part 1

[Free ADHD coaching mini-session](#)

In this episode, we will discuss using [Preventive Teaching](#) with children who have a slight delay. This is episode 80. Let's begin.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siopa Kinikini.

Hello, my friends. How are you? I hope everyone is doing great. I am doing fantastic. These are difficult times though. I mean, there's a lot going on in the world and I know that there is a lot of stress out there that a lot of parents are feeling. In fact, the reason that I know this is I have been able to communicate with some of you who have [contacted me through Smarter Parenting for coaching](#).

And it's been interesting to discuss with you the challenges that you are faced with now having your children home full time, you being home full time and dealing with the requirements for school work. I mean, the school year is not over yet and there are a lot of demands that are being placed on parents right now. However, I do want to state that you can do this! You can absolutely do this and we are here to absolutely help you along the way.

So, I wanted to share with you one of these coaching sessions that I went through this week. And the reason that I felt that this was important to share with you is because I think a lot of parents are going through the same things. In fact, the majority of the questions that I have had, have to do with feelings of anxiety and anxiousness and frustration because of working with their children at home under these stressful situations.

I get it. This is a common feeling that a lot of parents are experiencing, and so I just wanted to talk more about how you can go about working through this. In fact, during this podcast, what I want to talk to you about is using something that we use all the time in Smarter Parenting. It's a skill called Preventive Teaching.

Now, if you've been listening to the podcast for a long time, that's great. This will be super helpful for you because you are going to be able to see it in a new way. For those of you who are just joining us for the first time, this is a very important skill for you to have under your belt. This is a tool that you can use and that will be helpful for you in the long run when you're working with your children.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

And Preventive Teaching is, in this case, we're going to be talking about how Preventive Teaching is used to help your child. And specifically in this instance, an example of how a mother was able to use this skill with her child who has some developmental delays in her home as she is homeschooling him now because of the outbreak. Because of the pandemic.

So, what we're going to cover in here is talking about Preventive Teaching. [I'm going to go over the steps to Preventive Teaching so you know exactly what they are.](#) Then I'm going to explain how this skill was helpful for this mother and for her son. Mind you, this is a skill that I introduced to her and she began using immediately and she saw results happening right away. In fact, this wasn't something that took a long time for her to see some results happening.

And so, you can use this skill. Now, whether or not you'll see results will depend on your ability to use the steps effectively all the way through and to be consistent. For the most part, you will see changes happening in your children as you start to implement this skill. So, let's start off first by talking about Preventive Teaching and what it is.

In my discussion with this mother, her name is Dawn.. Super fantastic, very gregarious woman. If you can assign a personality, she's a red personality. She wants to get things done. She's very efficient. She really wants to focus on the things that are most important.

And so, we were discussing this issue of her son being unable to start schoolwork. Like that was the big issue was it always seemed like she was struggling to get him to the table to pull out his books and to get everything taken care of. So, while we were discussing this, I got to know Dawn a little bit and I started to introduce this concept of Preventive Teaching.

And with Dawn, it was funny because our conversation started to talk about ways she was already using Preventive Teaching. Now, for those of you who don't know what it is, Preventive Teaching is a skill that you use in order to help prepare your child for a future event. There are six steps to Preventive Teaching that you would use in order to help them get ready.

Usually, you would use this skill if your child had a problem going to the store and being able to behave appropriately or to help your child do something that may be scary for them like stand up and give a speech. That's something that you would use Preventive Teaching for. So the event hasn't happened yet, but you're preparing your child for the event by teaching them exactly what they need to do. That's what Preventive Teaching is.

So, while I was talking to Dawn, it was fascinating. I asked her to describe what it was like when she was pregnant with her child and getting ready for her child to come into the world and her anticipation, her thoughts, and her dreams because she didn't know that her child was going to have some developmental issues or delays.

And so, she told me that they were super excited. They found out she was pregnant. She struggled with infertility for a while, but the child was a miracle, an absolute miracle. And so,

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

when they heard that she was pregnant and she was far enough along that they knew that the child was coming, they went and they purchased everything that they possibly could need for a nursery. And they got a bed ready. They got all these clothes ready. They had diapers for days, is what she said. They did all this prep work upfront before the baby even arrived.

And she described it as a very happy time for her. And I thought about talking to her a little bit more about that. And during our discussion, we started to ask her, "Okay, after the baby came, then what happened?" And she said, "Well, we kind of went into automatic mode where we just deal with things as they come."

And that's where I started to point out how preparing for something before it happens gives you a sense of peace if you're just waiting for things to happen. There's almost a sense of, "[I don't know what's going to happen but I have to be reactive instead of proactive.](#)" Very, very different feelings and very different approaches when you're working with children, right?

So I said, "What would it be like if we could take that proactiveness that you took and we could apply it now to where you were preparing for things before they happen and you are preparing your child for things before they happen rather than waiting every morning and going through the rounds with him?" And she said that would be fantastic. We did describe what it felt like for her as they anticipated this baby and how excited they were for the day to arrive when he could actually be in their arms and they could raise him.

And she was able to remember those feelings and those emotions and I said, "You can have that same thing. You can do it. You can absolutely prepare, anticipate for things that are going to come." Now, this is not uncommon for a lot of parents. In fact, there are a lot of parents who when their child comes into the world, they are anticipating, and they're excited, and they're preparing. And that's the keyword is preparing.

They're preparing so much for this child that when the child comes it's just peace and excitement and, "Yay, and let's just enjoy this time." And yet as children grow up, and this is very common, we tend to go into automatic mode where we address things as they arise rather than being proactive and preparing for them like we did before the child was born and really we should be doing both.

We should be preparing for children before they arrive, and we should be preparing for the things that are coming up in a child's life. Anticipating challenges that they may have and preparing them, and us, for those changes. Now, if you're listening as a parent, are you doing that? Are you anticipating the issues or the problems that are going to come or are you waiting until the moment happens and then you're addressing them?

In talking to Dawn, she just waited until they happened. And so that's where a mind-shift had to happen. We had to look at it and say, "Okay, what can we do to prepare? What can we do to prevent issues from arising?" And that's where we landed on the skill of Preventive Teaching.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

So, Preventive Teaching again is this skill that we use in Smarter Parenting, from the Teaching-Family Model, that prepares us for things that will occur in the future that will help your child know exactly what to do and how to behave. And as I mentioned before, there are six steps. I'm going to outline them because I think it's great as a refresher for those who have heard this before, but also for new listeners so you can understand how Preventive Teaching works.

The six steps to Preventive Teaching are simple to understand and they may be a little more challenging to implement. But here are the six steps to Preventive Teaching.

Step one is to say something positive about your child's behavior or express empathy about how they may be feeling.

Step two, describe how you want your child to act. Avoid telling your child how not to act.

Step three, give your child a meaningful reason to behave that way. [The reason must be meaningful to your child.](#)

Step four, practice the expected behavior. [This is Role-playing. This is the most important part of Preventive Teaching.](#)

Step five, find something positive they did during the Role-play and correct only if necessary. [So, you want them to be able to Role-play what they are supposed to do effectively on their own.](#) You want to get to that point and if you need to make corrections, you can.

And the last step is to continue to practice. Once the child has done it correctly, practice it at least four times. So, you want to look at consistency. Are they able to do it more than three or four times on their own without being corrected or prompted?

So, those are the steps.

Now, in working with Dawn and using these steps, the first thing, say something positive about your child. This is something that is super important as the first step because what it does is it breaks down the walls and it lets you communicate with your child in a positive way. It lets your child know, "Hey, I'm on your side and I can see that you're doing good things. I can recognize when you are behaving well," right?

It's very encouraging to get those types of affirmations, those confirmations from an adult, from a peer, from a parent to say, "Hey, I can see you are trying. I can see that you do well." And that actually helps ease your introduction of a new behavior to your child. So, in working with Dawn, that was the first step. Find something positive that he's doing and praise him for it.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

Now, step two related to what she needed to correct. Now, step two is describe what you want your child to do or how you want your child to act and avoid telling them how not to act.

I can tell you if there was an Olympic sport for telling children what not to do, a lot of parents would win the golden medal. We tend to believe that by telling our children what they should not do, they should know what they should do.

And it's the exact opposite. You need to tell your children what they need to do because that is more powerful than saying what not to do.

So, let me give you an example. I'm going to tell you to not think of a pink elephant. Chances are in your brain, even though I said not, you thought of a pink elephant. Why is that? Because I have made this suggestion and the suggestion is there. Why? Because I've ended with the words pink elephant and not got lost in the middle of that whole thing. Why? Because that's what we will focus on.

So, our children are no different. They will focus on what we say. And so, what we say needs to be intentional. And if you need your child to behave a certain way, you need to describe that behavior rather than what they should not be doing. You have to do a self-assessment to figure this out or have somebody observe you because sometimes you do it and you don't realize that you're doing it.

So, really take stock. Are you telling your children what to do or what they should be doing rather than what they should not be doing? Be aware, parents. You have to be aware and you have to focus your communication on what they should be doing. Now, step number three is to give a meaningful reason of why that behavior is important and giving a meaningful reason that is important for your child.

This is another trap a lot of parents fall into. In working with Dawn, we were talking about having her child because their issue was having him go to the table and get the study started for the day. School started for the day. That was the struggle and when I asked her what is a reason why that's important? And she said, "Well, it's important because it's less stressful for me." And I was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I get that it's less stressful for you, but you need to find a rationale or a reason that is important for your child to behave the way you want him to behave."

And she's like, "Okay." And then we started to toy around with that. This is a hard thing for a lot of parents to do. So she said, "Well, it makes everything in the home go easier." And I was like, "Wait a minute. No, no, that's for everything in the home. What is a reason specific for your child to follow the behavior you want him to do?"

It took a little bit, it took a little bit, and I'm not blaming parents because I'm a parent and I get it. We tend to focus on the big picture and we tend to focus on how things will be beneficial for us

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

and for the family at large. But if you can focus your reason in this step number three, that is meaningful for your child, your child is more likely to follow through. Why? Because children are centered on their own self-interest as they should be at this point, as they're growing in their learning. So, it's going to be far more effective to focus on what the child should be doing if they have a reason that is meaningful to them to behave that way.

Now, step number four is to practice. Practice what it is you want your child to do. So, after you explain, "This is what I want you to do," then you need to give a reason. Then you need to practice it. This is through Role-playing. You're going to do exactly what it is and in the Role-play, you are going to demonstrate it first and then you are going to have your child do it next.

That way that your child can see physically what it looks like. They can experience what it feels like. They can hear what it sounds like. I mean, you are giving them this whole experience of what you expect by tapping into all the different senses. Now, this is going to be specifically important for children who have developmental delays or for children who struggle with ADHD, because the more senses you can integrate into an interaction into correcting a behavior, the more likely they are going to be able to adopt it and use it.

So with Dawn, we focus specifically on how she could do this and demonstrate it to her son. And in this case multiple times so he could understand it. Practice, practice, practice. I practiced it with Dawn, and Dawn was to practice it with her son.

Now, step number five is find something positive that they did and then praise them for it. So with Dawn, I praised her for being able to do it exactly the way that she described. She was able to do it. I was able to see it. I praised her, "Good job. You were able to do exactly what we described."

And then step six was to continually practice. Again, step six, continually practicing this is super important because this, by practicing it over and over and over again for children who struggle with ADHD or children who have developmental delays, this is what is going to make it stick and stick faster. So, the more you can practice it various times of the day, the better off you're going to be in having that become a natural part of their behavior.

Those are the steps to Preventive Teaching. We've talked a little bit about Dawn, but let me go into the experience of working with Dawn and with her son. So, in working with Dawn and her son, it was fantastic. Dawn called up, she had this question. She had a lot of questions actually, and she wanted to address specifically this behavior of her child not going to the table to begin study when study was established in the home as the time for studying.

And so, we talked a little bit about the delay, the developmental delay that her son is struggling with. And he is fairly functioning but he does struggle a bit to understand concepts and to work

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

through them and really to grasp certain ideas. And so, that's where the Role-play actually came in super helpful.

But in working with her, we started off with step one which was, say something positive. For Dawn, we actually wrote this out on a piece of paper so she could pay attention and follow the script. [And we did the script in order for her to stay on task.](#) (Preventive Teaching Assignment on Smarter Parenting.) Otherwise, she might get distracted by something and not follow all the steps.

And it's important to follow all the steps in order and not veer off from these steps. So, she would say something positive like, "Oh, you were able to brush your teeth and get up in the morning, good job. You're here and it's time for study time." So something positive.

Now I also had her, because in this first step you can express positivity or empathy. We also had a second statement that Dawn could use for this first step, which was, "Hey, I know it's difficult in the morning to do your study time. I understand you're tired."

So, she could use either of those. And she was going to evaluate and determine based on the way her son was behaving in the morning on which one she was going to use for step number one. Which was say something positive about your child's behavior or express empathy on how they may be feeling.

Now in step number two, describe how you want your child to act. So, this was a doozy in working with Dawn because in working with Dawn, she had a whole list. Now, remember, Dawn is an A personality, red personality. She likes things done in a very specific way, and she has her agenda and she has a list. That's the way that she functions.

Her child on the other hand does not work that way. And so, he needs more guidance throughout this whole process. So when I asked Dawn, what are the things that we want to accomplish when he comes to the table, she gave me a list. She said, "I want him to prepare for study time by grabbing his backpack. I need him to take out his books. I need him to put the books on the table. I need him to get his pencils out. I need him to open his book. I need him to have his notebook ready. I need him to read what is in the book and then I need him to complete the assignment."

So, those are the list of things that she gave me that he needed to do. In talking to Dawn and in this coaching session I said, "Okay, how realistic is it for him to be able to follow all of those specific things?" And she said, "Well, it's not. I mean, I can only give him pretty much one task at a time." And so I said, "Okay, well let's start off with one task at a time. So instead of trying to tackle everything, let's tackle one thing and then we can build on it. So, what is the very first thing that we need to do?"

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

So, with her, it's like grab his backpack and put it on the table. I said, "Okay, let's just focus on that." Now, Dawn was apprehensive because she's like, "Well, I want him to do more than that." And I said, "I know what you want him to do, but we had to figure out what can he do. What is he able to do and where can we find success in what he's doing?" Because if we try and give him the whole list and expect him to Role-play the whole list, he's going to mess up and he will be discouraged and that further alienates his ability to follow through. And his feelings towards you will be apprehension and stress.

So, what we want to do is we want to find where is your child, what can they do and what can they be successful at? Let's focus on that and then build on that because I've seen this a million times. And I gave her a promise. I said, "When you focus on one success, you will start to see successes multiply. They almost multiply by double as you continually work through this."

So, we're focusing on something very specific and small, but she's going to notice by implementing this and having it become successful that it is going to affect everything else in his behavior.

This is something that I always say on the podcast, which is you change one part of the system, you're going to change the entire system. And that's the truth. It's the absolute truth. So, that was the goal. We're only going to focus at this time on him bringing his backpack to the table. So, that was step number two.

Now, step number three is she needed to give him a meaningful reason. A meaningful reason for him to follow through with what she's asking him to do. So, we went in the rounds with them. I'm like, "Okay, so what is meaningful to your child?" And she didn't want to do treats or snacks. She didn't want to do that. We talked about doing a chart where he can earn a star or something like that. She didn't want to do that.

She said, "You know what is really motivating for him is to be able to watch a clip of a YouTube channel that he watches where they are playing Minecraft." And I said, "Okay, well how much time does that take, because we can't reward him a ton of time watching videos for a simple act like getting his backpack and putting it on the table." And she said, "Well, let me evaluate that and see."

So, we were able to find a medium in there, but she felt like this was the most motivating thing for him to follow through the behavior. What we discovered is that this YouTube channel that shows people playing Minecraft, they also have little snippets that you could watch. So, she could have him watch a little snippet of an episode that is longer later on, but only if he complied with the backpack. He could watch this minute video and she's like, "I think that's going to work."

Now, can you see how tailor-made this is for this specific child? It's very tailor-made for this specific child and for this mom and for their needs. And that's what I love about this whole Teaching-Family Model and what we do at Smarter Parenting.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

Anyways, so we're going to use that as the meaningful reason. Now, in step number four was the practice. So, I practiced it with Dawn. I actually played the role of Dawn first and I gave an empathy statement. That's what I chose. I said, "You know, I know it's early in the morning. I know you're tired and I'm glad you're here so we can begin schoolwork." This is step number two, "What I need you to do is grab your backpack and put it on the table, and now moving into step number three. If you are able to do that, then I can give you a minute of watching this Minecraft commercial." Okay, so we went through that. And then I said, "Okay, so we're going to practice this."

And I practiced it with her. Then she practiced it with me. So, she then took the role of Dawn and I took the role of the child and we went through this back and forth, back and forth until she was very comfortable doing that and working through it. During this Role-play, obviously when she did something right, I praised her, which is step number five. I praised her. And then when things needed to be corrected, then I let her know that it needed to be corrected. And then we continually practiced it.

That's how I used it with Dawn initially to help her learn how to do this with her child. And then Dawn took this and she took the script that we had written out, and we focused only on getting him to get his backpack to the table to watch a minute of the Minecraft commercial video. Dawn implemented it. She did it. She was able to do it for a day. They practiced it multiple times until he was able to do it.

What Dawn did was she actually showed him how to grab the backpack. How to put it on the table. And how to sit at the table. So, she added the sitting at the table at the same time to this whole Role-play, and she was shocked to see that her son was able to do it without being told multiple times how to do it. So, they Role-played it over and over again until he was able to do it. And then she practiced it again with him later that evening and prepared him for the next day.

Can you see how this all works? She practiced it in the morning with him, practiced it in the evening and then told him, "Tomorrow, this is what we're going to do. We'll see how well you can follow through and then you can earn that minute watching the Minecraft video from YouTube." So, she reported that the next day she just needed to say the exact same thing she said the day before and something clicked in his head. Something clicked in her son's head that said, "Hey, wait a minute, this is familiar. I know exactly what this is." And he did it like he did it the very first time.

So, she was elated, absolutely elated. She gave him the reward of watching the video for a minute or so and then they talked about it and she decided to add one more thing. Now, remember, her list was really long. So, she had grab his backpack, take out his books, put the books on the table, get his pencils out, open the book, open the notebook, reading, complete the assignment.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

So one by one, she started to add these different things. And what she noticed was after she started adding on one or two things, he started adding on a few more things and she noticed that he was more engaged and able to follow through by using Preventive Teaching. [By the end of the week, he was able to do half of the things on his own during this practice.](#)

Now, some days were more difficult than others, which is why she had two responses she could do for the first step, which was expressing empathy or praising him. And she noticed that when he woke up in bad mood, if she praised him, he actually responded in a more positive way. So, she was able to use the two different sayings or the two different ways to approach him before getting him to do what he needed to do.

And then she continually added and she added, and again by the end of the week, half of those things he was able to do on his own and she continually worked with him to be able to implement more and more and increase his skill level. And in that time, she's also increased the amount of time he's able to watch a Minecraft video.

Great success from Dawn, great success, super proud of her and her efforts. Her ability to absorb and adapt this skill to her family and to the situation. But this all happened through coaching. I mean, I coached her through using the skill of Preventive Teaching and how she could use it with her son. And then she used it with her son and she has seen success. Which is makes me happy. It makes me super happy.

So, this is the thing that I wanted to share it with you during this podcast is that by using Preventive Teaching with your child, you can really anticipate a lot of the problems that will arise later on and you can address them early. And by addressing these things early, there's a certain calm and a peace that comes with that. I'm going to remind you again of what it's like when you're expecting a child, a child that's born into your family, or a child who you are adopting.

Before the child comes to you and to your home, there is a bit of preparation that you go through to prepare. And think of how much time and how much of the resources that you had at the time you spend preparing for that child. Well, that type of energy, that type of focus, should exist throughout your child's life as your child grows because as they grow, new things happen and you can anticipate things that may occur in the future and help prepare them for it. Help prepare yourself for it. And there is absolutely a peace that comes when you are prepared. There's a peace that comes when you are prepared.

Now, for the parents who are really struggling and they're like, "Well, okay, I should have prepared before, but this is really hectic." It's not too late. You can do this. In fact, I can help you do this with your own children. I can teach you and we can individualize it to your family to find what works. I'm sharing this experience with Dawn to give you an insight into how this whole process works.

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#)

But with coaching, if you were to call me up, set up a time and we work through this together, you're going to see some miracles happen in your home. That's what coaching does, is it pushes things to absolutely the next level. It speeds up the whole process of you trying to figure it out because I'm there walking with you throughout this whole process.

So, that's my plug for you for coaching. I know Dawn would have been able to learn and figure this out using what's on the website. However, with the coaching, we saved a lot of time. I answered all her questions and we were able to implement something right away and she's already seeing success happen. Just fascinating, right? This stuff is amazing, people. It is seriously, seriously going to change your life and change your child's life.

So, sign up for coaching. You can find that link on the Smarter Parenting website. Again, I want you to know just how powerful this skill is of Preventive Teaching and the steps. So, go back and listen to this again. You can also tap into the video lesson that's available on the website. [If you really want to get to the nitty-gritty and you want to get to the next level, sign up for coaching because that's where we can work magic.](#)

That's it for me for this week. Hang in there. You're doing a great job, parents. Hang in there. It's a long road for sure, but we can absolutely do this together. That's it for me, and I will talk to you again next time.

[Free ADHD coaching mini-session](#)

PODCASTS MENTIONED IN THIS PODCAST

[Ep #62: Teaching to behaviors instead of reacting](#)

[Ep #51: Finding success with Preventive Teaching](#)

[Ep #48: What it takes to change behavior](#)

[Ep #13: Practice leads to success](#)

RESOURCES

[Behavior skill: Preventive Teaching](#)

[Steps of Preventive Teaching](#)

[Preventive Teaching Assignment: Child](#)

[Preventive Teaching Assignment: Teen](#)

[Blog: ADHD series part IV: Preventive Teaching and intrinsic movement](#)

[Podcast sponsor Utah Youth Village](#)

[Support the ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Donate.](#)

[The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast](#) with Siope Kinikini

© Smarter Parenting 2020

